









BRRRRRR! YOU  
THINK IT'S BAD  
NOW, "PANCHO",  
WAIT 'LL YOU  
GET *OUT*!

THANKS!  
I CAN  
HARDLY  
WAIT!



--HEY. WHAT'S THAT? LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING IN--OR ON--THE WATER. SORT OF LOOKS LIKE--



--AN OIL SLICK? BUT IT'S SO ROUND, ALMOST PERFECT... AND IT COULDN'T BE MORE THAN FIVE FEET ACROSS.



OH, WELL. MUST'VE  
BEEN SOME CARELESS  
BOATER OR SOME-  
THING.

YOU LADIES OKAY?

STUFF IT,  
MR. MACHO.



HUH. THAT'S WEIRD. LOOKS LIKE THAT OIL SLICK IS CLOSER NOW.

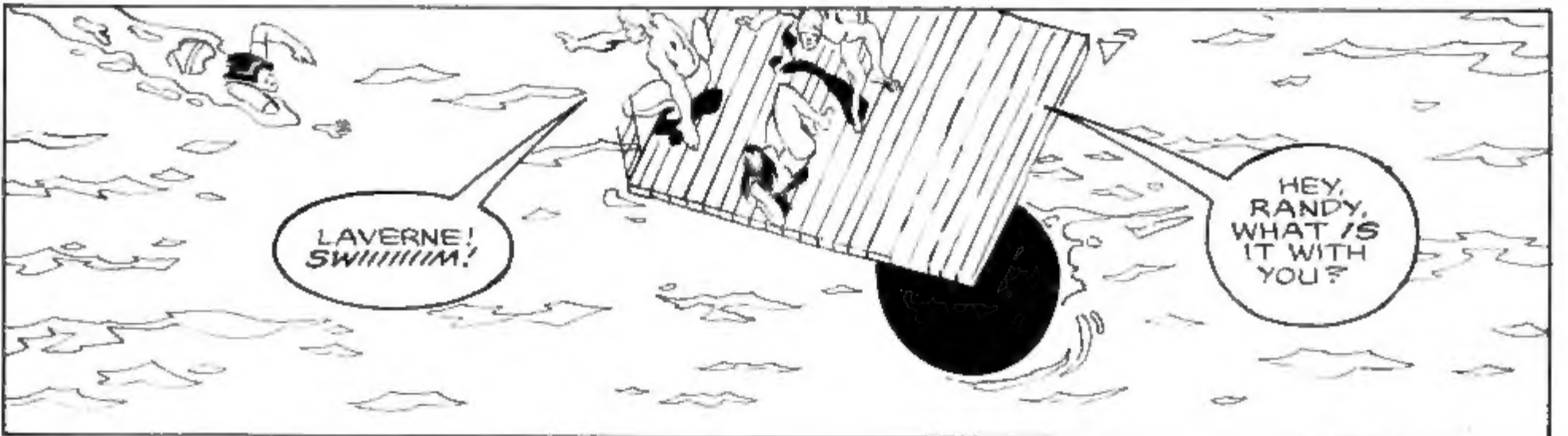


ALMOST  
AS IF IT WAS  
MOVING ON  
PURPOSE, AS  
IF IT WAS...



...ALIVE?!











RACHEL!

WH-WHAT  
HAPPENED?  
DID SHE  
FALL IN--?



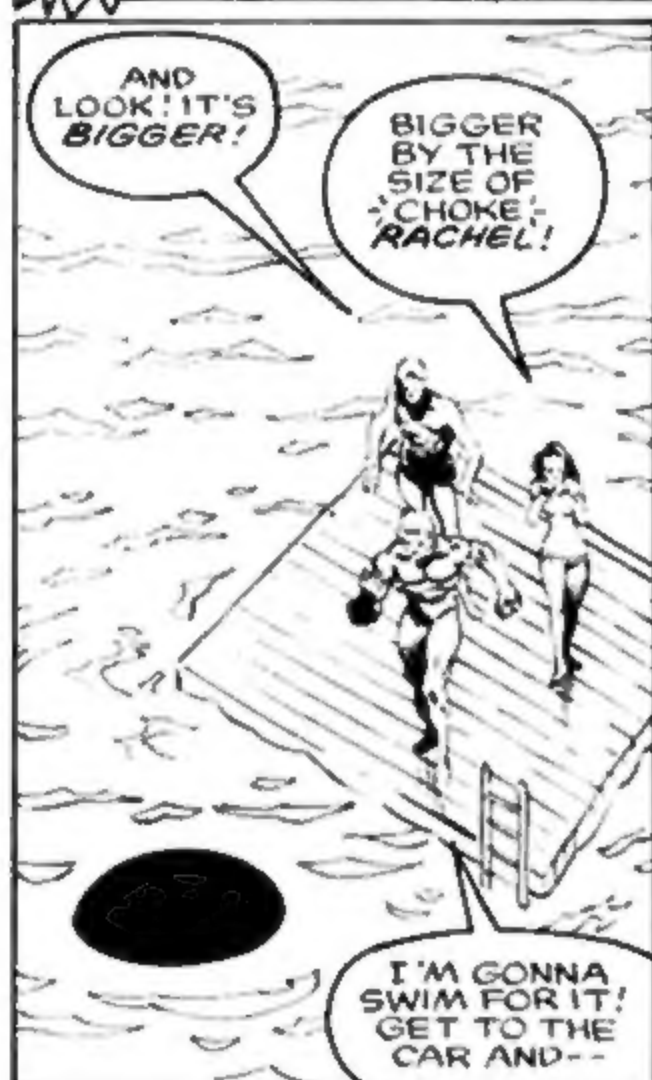
HELP ME!  
I-IT HURTS!  
OH, LORD, IT  
HURTS IT  
HURTS IT  
HUR--\*



EASE UP,  
"PANCHO"!  
SHE'S  
DEAD!

OH, GOD!  
I-IT...  
ATE HER!

BUT IT  
RAN UP HER  
ARM! I-I SAW  
IT PULL  
HER IN!



AND  
LOOK! IT'S  
BIGGER!

BIGGER  
BY THE  
SIZE OF  
CHOKE  
RACHEL!

I'M GONNA  
SWIM FOR IT!  
GET TO THE  
CAR AND--



NO! DEKE, Y-YOU CAN'T--!

LAVERNE IS  
RIGHT! YOU SAW  
HOW FAST IT  
TOOK RACHEL!

THEN WHAT  
DO WE DO?



MAYBE IT WAS HUNGRY!  
MAYBE NOW IT'S FULL!  
YEAH! M-MAYBE IT'LL JUST  
GO AWAY! BUT WHATEVER  
THE CASE, THE ONLY THING  
WE CAN DO...

...IS WAIT.



BUT WAITING IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE, AS AFTERNOON EDGES INTO TWILIGHT, AND TEMPERATURES DROP TO BONE-CHILLING LEVELS.

AN OCTOBER WIND CUTS THROUGH STILL-DAMP CLOTHING, AND PATIENCE BECOMES A VIRTUE EVER MORE DIFFICULT TO RETAIN.

FOR EVERYONE--

THE THING!  
I-IT'S  
MOVING--!

HEY! IT'S TRYIN'  
TA GET UNDER  
THE RAFT!

I'M GONNA  
SWIM FOR IT!  
RIGHT NOW!

NO! DON'T LEAVE  
US! DON'T--!

I'M FAST! I  
CAN MAKE IT!  
GOTTA GO WHILE  
IT'S STILL  
UNDER--HUH?

"P-P-PANCHO!"  
IT'S GOT MY--

FOOOOOOT!!



READY	STAY	CODE





NIGHT PASSES. FOR RANDY AND LAVERNE, IT SEEMS UNENDING. THE TAKE SHIFTS-- TREMBLING SENTINELS AGAINST THE UNKNOWN. AND WHEN DAWN AT LAST SMEARS THE EASTERN HORIZON WITH SAVAGE SCARLET, IT IS RANDY'S TURN TO WATCH.

BUT THE LACK OF SLEEP, THE FEAR AND CONSTANT TENSION, HAVE ALL TAKEN THEIR TOLL. AND ALAS, HE FORGETS NOT TO WATCH--



--TOO CLOSELY!



LAVERNE STILL SLUMBER AS RANDY GENTLY LAYS HER ALONG THE PAINTED BOARDS. HE'S WANTED HER SINCE HE WAS A FRESHMAN, BUT SHE WAS UNATTAINABLE, UNAPPROACHABLE.

SHE WAS DEKE'S.

BUT THAT DOESN'T SEEM TO MATTER NOW. SOMETHING--SOME THING--IN HIS MIND TELLS HIM IT'S ALL RIGHT. TELLS HIM THAT HIS RIGID SENTRY DUTY IS NO LONGER IMPORTANT.

AND SO HE SURRENDERS TO THE PRIMAL URGE THAT SUDDENLY SHROUDS ALL REASON, GIVING HIMSELF OVER FULLY TO THE PLEASURE OF THE MOMENT...

... AND THUS NEITHER HE NOR THE SLOWLY-ROUSING LAVERNE NOTICE WHEN SOME OF THE GIRL'S MATTED LOCKS SPILL INTO THE ICY WATERS OF THE LAKE. HOWEVER--

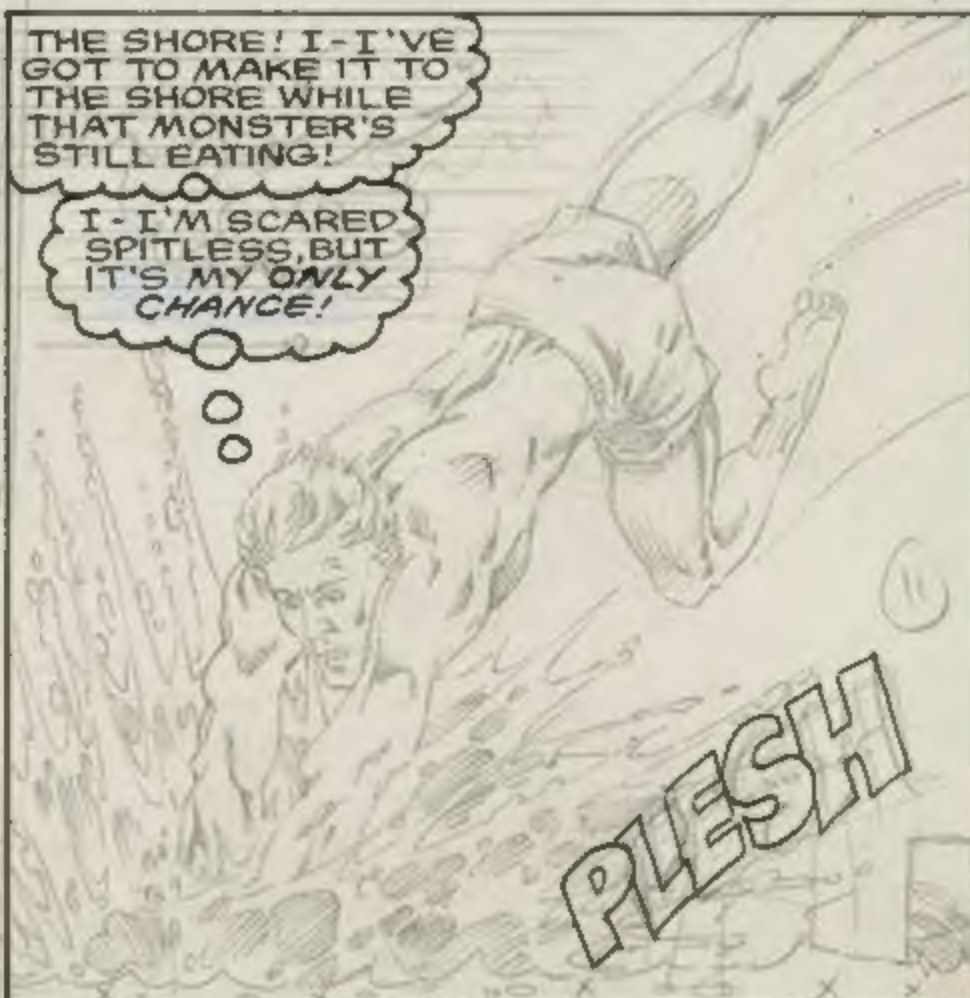




--SOMETHING ELSE  
DOES!

OH, MY  
GOD!

RANDEEEEEEE!





DESPERATE ARMS  
CLAW WATER,  
PULLING, TEARING.

WHILE SHORT YARDS AWAY,  
THE BLACK THING PULLS AND  
TEARS AT ITS LATEST MEAL.

RANDY  
SWIMS.

THE THING  
SWALLOWS.

RANDY GULPS AIR, THEN  
WATER. HIS ARMS FEEL LIKE  
LEAD, HIS LEGS LIKE  
CONCRETE PILING.

BUT SO IS  
HUNGER.

EXHAUSTION IS  
OVERWHELMING.

IT'S COMING AFTER  
ME! AND IT'S ALMOST  
TWENTY FEET  
ACROSS NOW!

SWIM,  
RANDY!  
SWIM!

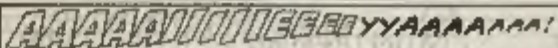
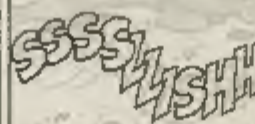
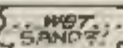
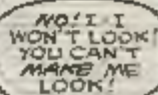
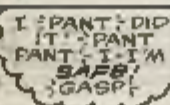
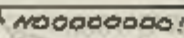
OH, NO! IT'S  
PICKING UP SPEED!  
GETTING CLOSER!

I'LL  
NEVER  
MAKE  
IT!

NO!

NO!





WELL, SWIMMERS,  
THAT WAS ER... SLICK!  
HEH HEH HEH